

INTERFLOW

By Geoffrey C. Faber

THE NEW POETRY SERIES

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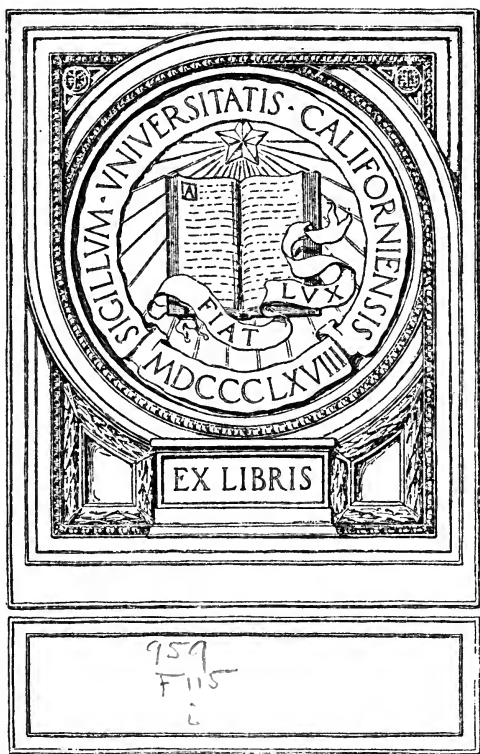


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INTERFLOW

POEMS, CHIEFLY LYRICAL

BY

GEOFFREY FABER



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IF I am asked, 'Is this a time for publishing poetry?' I can only reply that it is not the time which I would have chosen. It is not the hour indeed for artistic effort of any kind. That hour will come again; but it may be long delayed. It is fear of this delay which is responsible for the appearance of the following poems. They must brave the light now or, perhaps, never.

And yet there may be others who have felt (as I have), in the midst of unaccustomed duties, a stronger inclination than ever before towards all that adorns or enhances our spiritual life. Some of these, perhaps, may read what I have written, and be the kinder in their judgments because I am unfortunate in my opportunity. It would be sad if War were allowed to expel Art, even for a while, out of individual lives. If my book is regarded as a protest against the view that this is either tolerable or desirable, I am more than rewarded for any sacrifice of popularity.

CUCKFIELD, *April* 1915.

‘ But this in myself did I know,
Not needing a studious brow,
Or trust in a governing star,
While my ears held the jangled shout
The children were lifting afar :
That natures at interflow
With all of their past and the now,
Are chords to the Nature without,
Orbs to the greater whole.’

MEREDITH, *A Faith on Trial*.

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'To a Certain Poet,' 'Love in May,' 'Love Remembered,'
 'In a Room,' 'Sic Transit Gloria Mundi,' 'Usque quo,
 Domine,' 'Quia Impossibile,' and 'A Fable,' originally
 appeared in the *Oxford Magazine*; 'For Those at Sea'
 originally appeared in the *Westminster Gazette*. The
 Author is indebted to the Editors of these papers for per-
 mission to reprint the poems here.

PREFACE

It is no longer in the fashion for poets to write prefaces; this was once their prerogative, but they have yielded it to the playwrights, who magnify it more than ever the poets did. Yet a new writer may, perhaps, on his first appearance, say what the art he practises signifies to him, and give the critics an opportunity of replying that his opinions matter to nobody except himself.

There are two kinds of poetry, as there are two schools of painting,—subjective and objective, the poetry which looks inward and that which looks outward, the poetry which discovers the symbols of romance in the soul and that which traces them in the sky or in the actual lives of men. For all poetry is romantic, in that it distorts facts; since facts are prose, and prose is not poetry. Or, more truly, prose is for the facts of experience; but poetry is to re-interpret experience, reading into it that which common sense would say was not there. And as we have two modes of experience (of ourselves and of our surroundings), so we have two forms of prose and two forms of poetry.

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Which is the greater is a hard question to answer, and each man must answer it to his own satisfaction. Which is the finer poetry, the *Odyssey* or the *Odes* of Sappho? which the greater poet, Catullus or Virgil, Milton or Shelley? or is he to be preferred above the others, who, like Browning, stretches his genius to cover both extremes? Nor are the alternatives always so simple; for it is possible (or by some thought possible) so to fuse subject and object into one, that what appears to be a landscape is in fact a battle of emotions, or (and this is perhaps more usual) what seems to be a battle of emotions is, in fact, a landscape. It may be thought curious to state these distinctions in a preface and not to resolve them. But if I cannot resolve them, I cannot but be conscious of them; and all these kinds of poetry will be found in this volume. I am only anxious that I should not be called thoughtless, because I have not yet evolved a final philosophy of art, or inconsistent, because I have not resisted the influences of my day.

There are other problems than these, dragons which must be faced if not slain by the modern poet; since the spirit of the times no longer allows him to wander 'fancy-free.' What is it which he puts into experience—is it one ingredient only, or two, or more? He cooks his facts; with what does he season them, and where does he buy his relishes? Is he to beautify experience, or to make it horrible?

PREFACE

The facts are tasteless ; is he simply to make them more palatable ?

We used to call the ingredient which Art puts into life, beauty. But that answer is now out of date ; it is at least only in part true. There are many poems which are not beautiful at all, but drab or ugly or horrible or forcible or even humorous, but which are nevertheless unmistakably poetry. Perhaps it may be said that poetry intensifies experience ; it concentrates the emotions, which too often spend themselves ineffectually in the sands of life. So that the love or the fear or the hate, which in experience appear as liking or timidity or aversion, are shown to us naked by the poet. He interprets experience by and through experience ; he uses the rare moments to reinforce the common ones.

‘ O delight

And triumph of the poet,—who would say
A man’s mere ‘ yes’, a woman’s common ‘ no’,
A little human hope of that or this,
And says the word so that it burns you through
With a special revelation, shakes the heart
Of all the men and women in the world,
As if one came back from the dead and spoke,
With eyes too happy, a familiar thing
Become divine i’ the utterance !’

And yet this is not all. For beauty may not be Art’s only ingredient, but it is certainly the commonest and best. The sublimest Art, whether it be

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music or poetry or painting, is that which floods the soul with beauty. And this beauty differs in kind from all the other ingredients which Art uses, since it is not properly an ingredient at all, but a quality which experience of almost any kind can take on, mystical, evident but not to be explained. I will not conceal my belief that beauty, so understood, belongs not to this world of sense, but to another world of the spirit. It comes into being when the facts of this world are brought into sudden unsuspected union with the facts of that other world; and this union is effected only by those 'intimations of immortality' which fade away so quickly and are so hard to recapture in the light of common day.

'O life, O poetry,
—Which means life in life ! cognisant of life
Beyond this blood-beat,—passionate for truth
Beyond these senses—'

So, again, Mrs. Browning. And the same idea has been subtly and beautifully clothed by the present poet laureate :

'For Beauty being the best of all we know
Sums up the unsearchable and secret aims
Of nature, and on joys whose earthly names
Were never known can form and sense bestow.'

All these observations, it will be said, ignore the importance of form. But what is form, except the shape taken by thought? And how can one thought

PREFACE

take many shapes? With each shape it must become a new thought. We cannot say of a poem that its form is defective, but that it is a fine poem, as, for instance, has been said of 'Love in the Valley.' Essential to a poem is its rhythm, and the meaning of the poem is conveyed as much by its rhythm as by the words of which it is composed. Motion is the most expressive of languages; but it expresses states and moods, rather than ideas. For this reason, plain prose, which is rhythmically poor and deals in ideas rather than moods, is inadequate to render a true account of the world. For the world (that is, the whole sum of a man's experiences) is much more a matter of moods than of facts; and the business of poetry is to intensify our appreciation of the world in all its several moods of love and hate, joy and despair, confidence and terror; above all, by that subtle medium of beauty to show its relation to the other world, whose moods are beyond our comprehending.

HIGHGATE, *July* 1914.

TO P. A. T.

THIS midland town is emptied for a while
Of all the military sights and sounds
Three months of war have bred in her. The style
Of my new life relaxes. To the fire
I draw my chair; beyond the rigid bounds
New-set to thought and new-set to desire
Fancy adventures, making holiday.
And first, before she visits remoter lands,
Or takes swift wing on that more arduous way,
Uncharted, which her task is to explore,
She with her sister Memory joins hands—
Those twin dear angels, whom I both adore—
And Memory whispers '*It is not far to go*',
To Rugby, and eleven years ago.

This very morning, gone eleven years!
I wonder what I did then, how I looked.
What should I think of those raw hopes and fears,
Long since forgotten? Yet every one was booked
To my account, and bears its interest still.
No doubt I found the morning dull enough,
Wished I were free to follow my own will,
And thought my Greek Unseen was awfully tough.
But there were other times and other places;
Times, Philip, when we two foregathered shyly
And planned our lives and wrote our boyish verses,

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While down the passage someone strummed and
strummed

On the Glasshouse piano '*See the little Pansy Faces
Sitting on the Garden Wall*', and strummed most
vilely!

Will you believe me? That poor tune reverses
Eleven years; for just now as I hummed
I sat with you again and we were boys.
There's magic in that bit of vulgar noise.

You were the first and best of all my masters;
You showed me what I needed—that rare food
Of starveling imagination, poetry.
You taught me how to capture the fine mood
Which rears its head above youth's mad disasters,
Champing no bit and ranging fancy-free.
For all you taught me I can never render
Any account save this: if there be gold
In handiwork of mine, you were its lender.
I will confess I copied you of old.
And there are lines of yours I still remember
Affectionately, almost as my own.
And in my heart glows still a grateful ember
Left from the fire you built. I have outgrown
Many ambitions, but not that ambition
We shared together. Share we its fruition!

Ah! Philip, those were golden, golden days.
Winter and spring and summer came and went,
And were as verses in a fourfold song
Ending with autumn. And all that year along
Within our schoolboys' lives a life was spent
That was a very secret dream of praise,

TO P. A. T.

Of shadowy hope and love and wonderment.
And autumn passed and winter came again.
Do you remember now that farewell walk,
Upon a black and frosty afternoon,
By the canal? The earth in iron pain
Lay mute, and we were locked in strenuous
talk.

You said, '*Youth ends; manhood and work come soon.*'

And so you left me, lonely with my faith,
And with the year you passed and were a
wraith.

I have the faith still, though the vision fades.
The vision fades, but I am sure of heaven.
There *is* a peace, which thrice-hushed forest
glades

Own not; there is a glory which is given
Not to the kingdoms of this warring earth;
There is a beauty not of man or woman;
In all the highest that we bring to birth
There is an element which is not human.
I seek this still and I will seek for ever.
Better to be a fool and dote on truth
Than shame the soul in order to be clever;
For clever men make mock of their own youth.
And by whatever art, by what of skill
I can command, be this my utterance still.

The short day darkens; troops and guns return;
The trumpet sounds out bravely in the street.
I must forget the past again, unlearn
My very nature, till the world smells sweet

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Once more, and I am free to go my way.
Then, Philip, I will set these random lines,
Made for an index to my thoughts this day,
Before my book ; and they shall be for signs
That even in the midst of war I hold
The same faith that we two boys held of old.

NORTHAMPTON, *21st November 1914.*

NIGHT OF ROMANCE

NIGHT OF ROMANCE

*THE Prince as he walked in his garden
Gave command for music to be played,
In the evening when the starlight made
The dark trees visible against the sky.
It was that hour when we whom dull days harden
Soften and tremble, though we know not why.*

Far away through the leaves and branches floated,
Soft as the starlight glimmering in the lake,
Shy harmonies scarce born but they did break
In mists of falling sound, which sweeter seemed
Than the inspired songs of silver-throated
Birds in some Paradise whereof he dreamed.

He was not old ; for still with comely down
Soft were his cheeks as beds of fragrant bloom.
Yet in his heart all was darkness, all was gloom.
Heavy upon his shoulders lay the hand of madness ;
Deep in his young forehead the graven frown
Betrayed the long hours, the hours of sadness.

One who loved him watched from a distance,
Noting every gesture, every sweet and bitter motion,
Torn by hate and by devotion,
Longing now to kiss him and ready now to kill ;
Fiercely she longed to feel his weak resistance,
Force him to surrender, work on him her will.

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Still through the night air, heavy and enchanted,
The sad notes hovered, lingering while they faded ;
Even as the lover, whom his mistress hath upbraided,
Lingers near her window, till the dawn bids him
depart,
Filled with forebodings lest perchance he be
supplanted ;
And his eyes are lit with anger, but tears are in his
heart.

Up and down, between tall banks of flowers,
Beneath the branches of heavy-scented trees,
Sauntered the slow courtiers in twos and threes,
The Prince alone and moody, they following after,
Delicately bred for palaces and bowers
And gentle passions and soft considered laughter.

Yellow the moon rose, the yellow light ran,
Silently possessing the hills and valleys ;
And over the tree-tops and down the alleys
It brimming poured. The yellow moon rose,
And the dusk ended and the night began.
It seemed such night could never close.

Sudden in the moonlight her white arm glistened.
Sudden the knife flashed. She caught him falling.
She caught him to her, softly calling
Him prince and sweetheart, and kissed his paling
Lips, and made as though she listened.
But fast his blood flowed, his breath was failing.

And still the courtiers strolled and jested,
And still the music sighed through the garden.

NIGHT OF ROMANCE

And struck with horror she watched the blood
 harden,

And knew him dead, and said, 'Have I killed him?'
Wondering if dead souls might be wrested
Back from the dead. But no life thrilled him.

Still through the night air, heavy and enchanted,
The soft notes hovered, fading as they lingered.
And still disdainful ladies fingered
Leaf and petal while lovers flattered.
Frail roots of passion untimely planted!
Image of peace so rudely shattered!

As when the slow swell urges shoreward
Beneath the whitening face of the goddess,
And girls go bathing. Skirt and bodice
Lie in a moon-sent silken shimmer
Empty on the sand. And each steps forward
Into the warm water, each sweet bare swimmer.

Laughing in the water and splashing and playing,
Arms linked together, idly they float,
Lifted now and sinking to the hollow, like a boat
Fair-fashioned with limbs and breasts and faces,
Upwards and downwards and upwards swaying
Idly they float in linked embraces.

Idly they float, till sudden horror seizes
Hearts and throats, for down in the hollow
Of a wave gone by and the wave to follow
One swims alone and cries assistance.
And in their veins the swift blood freezes;
For she is gone, making no resistance.

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Down sank the music ; and like a bird from cover
Broke upon their ears a wild sound of sobbing.
It rose, it fell, it set the night throbbing.
And each man shuddered and ceased from wooing ;
Each woman trembling besought her lover
What evil matter might be brewing.

They saw her then ; they saw him lying
Prone in the moonlight upon the ground,
Silent. And still the dreadful sound
Rose and fell and set the night throbbing.
And terror-stricken they were for flying,
But she beheld them and stayed her sobbing.

‘ Ah you ! ’ she said, ‘ who strolled and jested,
Lo, here ’, she said, ‘ your Lord and Master !
Not his nor yours is the worst disaster,
But mine, who loved him and have killed him.
Can dead souls be by crying wrested
Back from the dead ? ’ But no life thrilled him.

None spake. Like tender flakes of snow
Scattered the courtiers ; in twos and threes
They through the high-arched gloom of the trees
Delicately fled to their palaces and bowers,
Steeping the unwelcome sense of woe
In savour of wine and in scent of flowers.

No more she wept. And soon serene
She clapped her hands. Thereat a slave
Came running and knelt. To whom she gave
Her orders, saying, ‘ The Prince no longer
Is to obey, but I, the Queen.
For I among these am the stronger.’

NIGHT OF ROMANCE

*The Queen as she walked in her garden
Gave command for music to be played,
In the evening when the starlight made
The dark trees visible against the sky.
It was that hour when we whom dull days harden
Softens and tremble, though we know not why.*

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THE RAREST GIFT

THE rarest gifts God can bestow
Do with the littlest children go.
Be these of body or of soul
They shine as never aureole
Shone round the head of fabled saint,
Untarnished yet nor yet grown faint.
What be these gifts? Who asks is blind.
Not hidden are they nor hard to find.
In every street in every city,
Though much there be to quicken pity,
Who cannot see what is so plain,
'Tis certain he has eyes in vain.
Let him but be taught of me
To look upon them lingeringly,
He shall find that he is given
Such a key as opens Heaven,
Of his own heart the master key.
(If Heaven's not there, where can it be?)

'Come put these beauties to the proof!'
He obstinately holds aloof.
He will not look, he will not learn,
Aside his feet will never turn.
He goes upon the hard, white road.
His pride is in the heavy load,

THE RAREST GIFT

The load he bears upon his back.
His eyes are fastened to the track.
He will not look, he will not hear,
Though angels whispered in his ear.

There are the children's voices. Hark !
Children are playing in the park.
Now surely that clear treble cry
Must catch him as he passes by.
'Tis like a lasso loosed and thrown
To tangle all who walk alone,
To bring them where the children play
The whole unending summer day.

And now the day is at its height.
Noon stills the chattering birds; the light
Blinds the poor traveller on the road.
Full heavy is his heavy load.
Beneath the clustering oak 'tis sweet
To rest upon the carven seat;
He sits him down, his fardel lays
Upon the turf; his dull glance strays
Where little boys and girls are seen
On the gilded glowing green,
Chasing each other round and round,
Making such a merry sound,
That even the blackbird stops his trill.
The traveller smiles against his will !

Deepens the day ; at length are hushed
Their voices too. Weary and flushed

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The children scatter to the trees,
And each stops short soon as he sees
There underneath the clustering oak
The Traveller in his travelling cloak.
Now, gloomy Traveller, thou art caught !
At no price can escape be bought.
Here comes with grave regarding eyes
Their general, and thee spies,
Full seven years old, and four feet high,
—Tremble thou mayst, thou canst not fly.

Brave men respect the brave. The foe
Has eyed him o'er from head to toe,
And given the word—his life is spared.
(Though what had happened had he dared,
In pride of old age, to rebel,
I have not wit enough to tell !)
And round the Traveller's either knee
Gathers the little company.

They made him tell a story, who
Adventureless had lived life through.
But in his meanly furnished mind
Stories, alas ! were hard to find,
Till searching there he came at last
On a ballad from the olden past,
And told the tale of Robin Hood
And his gay life in the green wood.
Then did the children live again
The lives of Robin and his men.
And while he spoke and while they listened,
I saw that tears in his eyes glistened,

THE RAREST GIFT

I knew that in his heart once more
Wide open stood the long shut door.
And there I left him, well content ;
For of all gifts to children lent,
That gift is prized more than gold
Which saves a soul from growing old.

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FALLIT PLACIDI PELLACIA PONTI

THE cliff gleams white beneath the flying spray ;
The sun shines out ; the storm clouds flee away ;
At Night's approach the still disordered Day
Grows calm and gathers up her torn array.

But there is that upon the wreck-strewn beach,
Round which the circling sea-crows swoop and
 screech,
Soon but a heap of bones for the sun to bleach ;—
And yet the Day departing smiles on each.

Ah ! how canst thou, whose cruel hands have maimed
That eager spirit, which lies torn and tamed,
Laugh and forget and be no more ashamed
Than is the wanton sea of the prey she claimed ?

HIS LOT AND HERS

HIS LOT AND HERS

‘LEAN over me’, he said ; and she leaned and touched
his hair.

‘Kiss me’, he whispered ; and she kissed, she kissed
him there.

Long he held her, he would not let her go
Till his breath was failing ; he loved, he loved her so.

‘Leave me’, he said ; and she left him and went her
ways.

‘Not to return’, he whispered, ‘for many, so many,
days.’

‘I go’, she answered ; ‘but, ah ! for I leave behind
With you the light of my eyes, I go forth blind.’

‘Come back to me’, he said ; and slowly she came
back.

‘What is it ?’ she asked him ; ‘what is it that you
lack ?’

‘O Love, I give you your question again’, he said.

‘Freedom’, she murmured, and wept, and turned
her head.

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FOREST POOL CONFESSION

THE wood beneath the moon
Is very still.
The storm is gathering ; soon
'Twill break upon the hill.
Hot is my breath
On the hot breathless air.
Far thundereth
A voice, Beware, beware !

The pool beneath the moon
Is very still,
As one who prays some boon
Too hard for his faint will.
Its surface seems
Of pure untroubled light ;
In its depths are dreams,
That hide themselves from sight.

A sweet stream entering in
Spread over me ;
A woman cried, ' 'Tis sin ;
I know he covets thee.'
Answering I said,
' Pure is this sin and sweet
Upon my head
And round my travelled feet.'

FOREST POOL CONFESSION

Whispered the stream's soft voice
Falling from my hair,
'Child, make now thy choice.'

Ah! he was fair.
With trembling hands
I loosened all my dress,
At his command
Gave him my nakedness.

I fell asleep,
While over me my stream,
Welling deep,
Led dream and dream and dream.
Waking once I wept,
Strangely afraid;
Again I slept,
Sleeping, was betrayed.

Now, like the silent pool,
I lie enchanted.
Slave am I to a hateful ghoul.
Love is supplanted.
Love was my king
Until I savoured Lust,
Now do whose beckoning
I not will, but must.

By the moonlit pool a child
Strayed delighted,
Coming to it from the wild
Unaffrighted.

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Undismayed he knelt
By its margin, where no child should linger,
Laughed and felt
The white water dimpling 'neath his finger.

Nothing could he guess (what wonder?)
Of what lay secret,
Of what shameful things lay under
That white coverlet.
The trees never stirred
To warn him ; when he listened,
Not a sound he heard ;
At his feet the water tempted, glistened.

Warm ringlets made way
For his little feet,
For his whole body they
Did entreat.
He unshrinking gave
Himself to their caresses,
They—a wet grave
And muddled tresses.

Alone beneath the moon
I hold my breath.
The widening eddies swoon
As still as death.
I wait ; alone
With tight-clasped hands and heart
Heavy as stone
I wait—do Thou Thy part.

SHE LIES BESIDE THE FIRE ASLEEP

OFTEN SHE LIES BESIDE THE FIRE ASLEEP

OFTEN she lies beside the fire asleep,
Resting white limbs on soft rich-coloured furs,
Till some uneasy half-remembrance stirs
Within her, and forgotten shadows creep,
Like pallid prisoners, from the mind's dim keep,
Heeding no more their ancient barriers ;
And still in sleep a mist of sorrow blurs
The image of her dream and she doth weep,
And waking to her self-imprisonment
Abhors her couch, and rising heavy-eyed
With swift hot fingers throws the casement wide
To the cool night and spacious firmament ;
And through the still air floats the magic scent
Of sleeping flowers in the field outside.

INTERFLOW

ON VIOLA, ASLEEP

BEAUTIFUL she is, as when the peeping sun
 Wakens to dewy life the river meadows
 And pale beams slowly thin the sulky shadows,
And misty glories are from darkness spun ;
As when the high rich-cargued galleon
 Of day departs, and all her pageant follows,
 And in the fields the evening flight of swallows
Earns them the rest that else was lightly won.

So beautiful is she ; with such sweet splendour
 Open her eyes from sleep, or smile on anger,
Or with such graciousness as flow'rs own, render
 Homage to sorrow or to heavy languour.
But if she wakes to tears, or smiles in sleeping,
'Tis one to me, for either sets me weeping.

TO THE POETS

TO THE POETS

MASTERS and makers of language, kings of song !
Each brings his tribute to you, as I must
Bring mine—this little heap of fugitive dust,
In feeble praise of you, who were so strong.
Aye, you were strong : your spirit hands did break
Earth's tough material structure. Like the cloud
Lifting at dayrise its reluctant shroud
From the blue bosom of the sun-kissed lake,

So, by your hands dispersed, this tyrannous veil
Was rapt and parted and your brimming eyes
Suffered the light and knew a splendid change.
For in your verse life all transfigured lies,
And strange is true, and truth no longer strange,
And there is magic in the humblest tale.

INTERFLOW

TO A CERTAIN POET

LAY down the veil: the vision's ended,
The vision keen, the vision splendid.
Quickly the flame dies down; so must
Thy heart's red embers turn to dust.

In barren souls, and darkened places;
In bitter, unilluminated faces;
In the waste mind, where shadows grope
About the bier of shrouded hope;

In the half-night of sombre hollows,
Where fear beckons, and terror follows;
In every man who lives alone,
His slow heart growing into stone,

If still some trace of the old love lingers,
Therein with thy magician's fingers
Scatter a handful and no more
Of the dust that lies on the temple floor.

Our spirit faints, the whole world sickens.
We need the word that stabs and quickens.
Go, stab thyself! and ere thou die
Come back, pale boy, and prophesy.

THE APPROACH OF LOVE

THE APPROACH OF LOVE

For many weeks I've seen him coming nearer.
At first he hovered, timid as a bird,
And started back at every sound he heard,
Queer wing-heeled boy! But this, in truth, is queerer,
That it escaped me he was growing clearer;
So clear now and so close! His cheek is furred
With down, and with desire his breast is stirred.
And he is dear to me and each day dearer.

Almost to-night I seem to feel his breath
Hot and sweet in my face. A mad swift thrill
Rushes to my heart, and all the world stands still.
Love, is it thou? I ask. He nothing saith,
But round me of a sudden his young arm clingeth,
And lip to lip and spirit to spirit springeth.

INTERFLOW

TO ———

SWEETHEART! It really is fit food for thought,
That though already I've written you a sonnet,
I still don't know your Christian name, and on it
I therefore cannot spin the rhymes I ought.
(Rhyme spinning on Christian names is merry sport!)
But, Christian names apart, your surname's done it.
Like a melodious bee in an empty bonnet.
It occupies my foolish brains. I'm caught!

I'm caught at last! I can't hold out any longer!
When first I saw you, I knew what it would be.
For fifteen months I kept my head. But see,
I'm on my knees to you. You are the stronger.
For all your slenderness of limb and feature
You've mastered me—you Christian-nameless
creature!

BEFORE THE DAWN

BEFORE THE DAWN

THE mist is still upon the fields. Ah, go !

Go quickly, sweet ! before the eaves-dropping sun
Surprise our secret from us. What is done
Is done for ever, ever must be so.

Come, shed no tears ; for tears can be of no
Avail to ravel that which time hath spun.

But pray that the little love which we have won
From envious time may in time's despite grow.

Be it thy prayer and mine, no source of tears !

What if we pray in lifelong loneliness ?
I shall encounter thee in Paradise.

Thy spirit radiant in its immortal dress
Shall be appointed unto me, the prize
Of stripling Love, who outlasts the giant years.

INTERFLOW

LOVE IN MAY

THE hills lie sleeping in the hot spring sun ;
And, as enchanted by some lazy charm,
We two lie dreaming, till the day is done
And the cool evening leads us to the farm.

O sweet long days, each longer than the last !
O sweet still nights, when through the window
wide
Steals the warm breeze, and all the day just passed
Is like a dream remembered by thy side !

O silent rapture, growing with the dawn !
When I awake to see the first pale rays
Fall timidly upon thy cheek and fawn
About thy clustering hair in suppliant ways !

Sweet days ! sweet nights ! alas, the end comes soon ;
Too soon the vision spends itself and dies ;
Too soon the morning passes into noon,
And Love goes lamely in an altered guise.

A MESSAGE FROM HIS LOVE

A MESSAGE FROM HIS LOVE

OUT of encircling silence grows
Thy soft voice of a sudden, friend ;
Thy self, like windy fragrance, blows,
The fragrance of a garden rose,
Blows on me. And my soul is wrought
To sudden and uplifting thought,
And her uneasy time is at an end.

Across the Italian lakes it came,
By Alpine passes, and above
The darkened plain of France, a flame
By starlight running to its aim.
And now the early morning breeze
Hath brought it over chilly seas
To me at waking—‘ I am with thee, Love.’

INTERFLOW

FOREBODING

Lo, from the dark my candle shining gravely
Wins for me her gold and spends it bravely.
Breathes but the night, so must she quake and
gutter.

Ah me! how frail the flame, the dark how utter!

So you stand, a little dim flame burning
In my soul, whereunto I returning
Grove my ways through dark and sad approaches,
Crumbling paths where the wild sea encroaches.

Ah! the fear that some day in the forest
In the dangerous places thou abhorrest,
I'll be seeking, solitary, grimly,
While at home thy light fails, flickering dimly.

Ah! if ever I should lose thy golden
Glimmer in my soul, if un beholden
Thou shouldst die, alone and unattended,—
Love is dead in me and hope is ended.

DEPARTURE

DEPARTURE

HERE, where all ways together meet,
Here must we halt, make our farewells ;
And while with lightly jingling bells
Your carriage fares along the street,
Here must I stand, until the beat
Of horses' hooves no longer tells
That you are near, and silence knells
Death to the old life and the sweet.

O, hardly, hardly, hardly dies
What could not die within my heart,
Did Time not know the cruel art
Of crushing useless poignancies.
There will be many heavèd sighs,
And many times the old wound will start,
And many times I will go apart
To let the hot tears blind my eyes.

INTERFLOW

CRI DU COEUR

It cannot ever be again !
O Love, is this the last sad epitaph
Of all my hopes, of all my joy and pain ?
Never to watch again
Thy sweet lips parted for the low sweet laugh,
Nor kiss away the tears that thou couldst not refrain.
The cup stood brimming full for me to quaff,
And now—it cannot ever be again !

It cannot ever be again !
Why do I sit here, by the perished fire
In this cold room, with sick and fevered brain ?
Never to thrill again,
Like the poor broken lyre
Hanging forlorn in the deserted fane,
To that deft touch which only could inspire
Its trembling chords to every passionate strain.

LOVE REMEMBERED

LOVE REMEMBERED

I HAD forgotten how, in long past days,
I threw the reins loose on love's straining neck,
And, when my chariot came to sudden wreck,
For my escape I gave God coward's praise.
I had forgotten those enfevered ways,
The haggard hours, when I did nothing reck
But how I might be ever at love's beck,
Serving love's latest whim, love's maddest craze.

These things I had forgotten, and I deemed
Myself the soberest votary of all,
Who worship at the shrine of common things:
Until you played to me, and straight it seemed
That without love life is a barren wall
Beside a desolate road, where no flower springs.

INTERFLOW

AWAKENING

So long the night,
I had almost forgotten the day,
When we watched the crimson light
Of the evening fade away.

And cold and chill,
As the endless dark of the north,
There gathered about my will
A cloud of dull wrath.

Unlock me the treasure,
Dear child, who hast taught me again
The sorrow of smiles and the pleasure
Hid in the heart of pain !

IN A ROOM

IN A ROOM

I LIKE best when you lie at my feet
In front of a low red fire,
And the room is dim-lighted and sweet
With the smell of your old black briar.

I like best when your fingers travel
Over the red-lit pages,
Hard at work to unravel
Secrets of other ages.

And the kettle is vexed, and persists
In steaming a stern disapproval
Of such methods of work, and insists
On its instant removal.

I like best to look up at the ceiling
And watch with vague eyes
The shadows come silently stealing
To take the firelight by surprise,

Pouncing out from their dark hiding-places
Like ghostly black kittens at play ;
When he scolds them they mock and make faces
And scamper away.

INTERFLOW

I like best to lie still and dream
Of a long-ago nursery bed,
And the fire as it used to seem
To a little drowsyhead ;

And to hear all the while on my right
The patter of filmy feet,
As your thoughts flutter down and alight
Thick and fast on the written sheet.

So I doze, and you write, till an ember
Falls noisily into the grate,
And I come back to life and remember
That dinner's at eight.

OLD LOVE

OLD LOVE

I NEVER saw the stars so bright ;
They never shone before with such fierce light
As on this cold, clear night.

It seems to me that up till now
My life has been content always to flow
Too sluggishly, too slow.

To-night I'll live, I'll love, I'll taste
Joys unattempted yet. My blood 's afire. O waste
Of my hot youth ! Haste, haste !

Lifting the latchet of the gate,
Something within me bids me stand and wait
Before it be too late.

The quiet sky, with stars aflame,—
Did I not see it long ago the same,
When my Love named my name ?

O Heaven ! What sin is this,
To sell my memories of unstained bliss
For one polluted kiss !

Back to the curtained room, the glow
Of warm fireside, the old books that I know,
And my Love of long ago.

INTERFLOW

SPRING DAY

(ON THE MALVERN HILLS)

Down the dust-ridden highroads go
The windy turmoils of the spring,
Tost back and forth and to and fro,
Tempestuously echoing.

High, high, above the smooth swept hills,
Cloud following cloud from the clear North,
Borne onward silent, stately, still,
Fares out and forth, fares out and forth.

Here in a sun-warmed sheltered place
I lie midway 'tween gods and men,
Above their blind and furious race,
Beneath their universal ken.

FEBRUARY MORNING

FEBRUARY MORNING

LET me upon the Future and the Past
My soul's eyes no more cast ;
Let me, beholding hedges stript and trees
Naked to the Northern breeze,
Unbare me beneath the frost-blue even as these.

Hard is the ringing road, pale the hoar fields,
Still the white mist-robe shields
Each shrinking hollow ; scarcely has the sun
His young dominion won.
Scarce do the feeble clouds before him run.

It is sufficient. In this moment I
Question no by and by.
It does content me that the morning air
Is keen, that everywhere
Some spirit is moving, blithe and sweet and rare.

INTERFLOW

THE MIRACLE

FROM a chasm carved in brown crumbling earth,
A red bare rent in the green hillside,
A hungry fissure lean and dried,
Like a cruel scar or an ugly weal,
Or an obstinate wound that will not heal,
There came a wonderful thing to birth—
A thin clear stream, that tumbled down
From the tip of this tongue of thirsting brown,
Over ice-worn boulders and sculptured ledge,
And gravelled shallows and marshy sedge,
A mischievous little imp of an elf,
Jumping from shelf to rocky shelf,
Here a moment and then down there,
With drops of water for locks of hair,
And the twinkling feet of a water-gnome,
And a thin-spun shirt of gossamy foam.
Swiftly down the steep he fled,
Till he slipped and fell in his pebbly bed.
Then over he rolled upon the ground
Faster and faster and round and round,
With snatches of laughter and catches of song,
As he found himself merrily bouncing along,
Flinging defiance at the breeze,
'For you', said he, 'are old and wheeze,

THE MIRACLE

And, however you puff and however you blow,
You can't stop me where I want to go !'
Then all at once the little rover
Reached a tall cliff and slid right over,
And fell into a deep, clear pool,
Sunny and yet most sweet and cool.
And there he lay for an hour or more,
Breathless upon its sandy floor.
But I've no breath left to tell anything, save
That he grew to be solemn and grand and grave,
And at last (I'm afraid you must take it from me)
He went down soberly into the sea.

INTERFLOW

LINES WRITTEN AT WASTDALE HEAD

THE Pageantry
Of the mid-night sky
In summer, when the clouds are few,
From evening
Till the dawn-birds sing
Streams statelily past the darkling blue.

The mountains dark
Keep silence. Hark !
There is no sound in all their places.
They fear to wake
The slumberous lake
That lies moon-charmed in their embraces.

AN AUTUMN SONG

AN AUTUMN SONG

Who can feel sorrow
In wind and rain,
When the hill-tops borrow
Sun from the plain,
And swift after cloud
Cloud follows apace,
And the Heavens are loud
With the song of their chase?

A rout of red leaves
Whirls past and away,
As the twilight retrieves
Her lost share in the day.
And who can feel sorrow
In wind and rain,
Though a stormy to-morrow
Brings both back again?

INTERFLOW

NOCTURNE

THE summits of the western hills
Are red with western fire.
Now memory of old love kills
The strength of new desire.
Now, as the face of him loved best,
My manhood fails and falls,
And new-awakened in my breast
The child-soul stirs and calls.

There is a music in the sky,
And earth lies still to hear,
While Heaven's ethereal harmony
Sweeps on its high career.
Are not the stones all listening,
And every restless leaf?
And my own eyes are glistening
With tears, but not for grief.

Night gathers on the glooming sea,
And like a ship becalmed
Not yet on slow wing comes to me ;
She too, it seems, is charmed.

NOCTURNE

And there is time to rest, as who,
 Enchanted in the waving fern,
Sees one star glimmer in the blue ;
 No more can he discern.

And somewhere Time himself has stayed
 His feet and lies asleep ;
And round him, who must be obeyed,
 Slow hours impatient creep.
And rapt afar one worker stands
 Leaving his task undone ;
In his frail glass the ceaseless sands
 Have ceased awhile to run.

Of late I drew my breath and sighed ;
 My eyes were wet with tears.
But I have lightly laid aside
 The vestiture of years.
Now, as a mother's arms uphold
 Her children to her face,
Earth's fastnesses and valleys fold
 Myself in their embrace.

Ah, wonderful to me and strange
 Forgetfulness of pain !
Faint presage of that greater change,
 Which all things shall sustain.
Meantime the dew shines on the leaf,
 The moonlight through the sea-born spray,
And life's small bitterness and grief
 Are less to me than they.

INTERFLOW

OTIA DIA

LAZILY lie we in the long deep grass,
Watching the clouds, one by one, slowly pass,
Seeking nothing, seeing nothing, but the waving
 grass and sky,
Cradled in these thyme-sweet meadows, dreaming,
 dreaming, till we die.

Soft as the breathing of a child asleep,
Sadder than the saddest tears men weep,
Sweet as honey, pure as silver, stranger than each
 day's new birth,
Music—breathes and trembles always in the un-
 trodden parts of earth.

Labour an hour, then rest and toil no more.
What need of aching limbs, hearts bruised and sore?
Vain it is to seek for ever; leave the undiscovered
 good;
Rest is here, beside the river and the magic-haunted
 wood.

RED WINE OF SUNSET

RED WINE OF SUNSET

For an hour past I have watched alone
The pale gold at the river bend
Redden into a deeper tone,
Betokening the end.

In a brief while the carmine tint
Must perish in the grey half-light,
And the stream will take a leaden glint
From the coming of night.

Could I stay the sun by some wizardry .
For a lazy hour at the world's red rim,
Ere he dips under the cloud-sea,
The stars following him.

Could I lie here as I lie now,
Like a jewel dropped from the blazing skies
On the bosom of earth, I might loose somehow
My shamefullest ties.

Like a pearl dropped in a golden bowl,
I might almost think in the sun's red wine
Melting the substance of my soul
To find the divine.

INTERFLOW

‘THE LONG CLOUDS STRETCH OVER THE HILLS’

THE long clouds stretch over the hills,
Behind which, out of my sight, even now the sun is
 setting.
As for me, I am under the shadow of the great
 mountains;
Darkness is upon me, and the first oncomings of
 night,
And the cold wind of the evening, which comes down
 from the passes at nightfall,
Mocking my desire for the spring,
Because of the promise which has thrilled the air all
 day long.

But the long clouds, stretching over the hills,
They see what I cannot see—the sun
Setting on the other side of the great mountains.
Though I stand up and cry aloud:
O ye clouds, ye who stretch over the hills,
Take me up into the blue heaven, where I may lie
 at my ease with you,
With you beholding the sun as he goes down to his
 rest behind the great mountains,
No answer comes in the wide, bare silence,
The silence of night approaching the day and of day
 watching the night.

‘LONG CLOUDS STRETCH OVER HILLS’

Nevertheless, in the clouds stretching over the hills
My answer is given me, there my answer is written,
Not in words, but as a painter puts his message
 into a picture,
Plain and clear to all, were it not for the many who
 cannot see;
Or as the Beloved in the face down-turned to the
 lover
Answers him without words, with a look, a smile, a
 quiet regard;
In such manner have I read my answer,
Not so much to the foolish words, but to the un-
 spoken yearning behind them.

O splendid clouds, ye who stretch over the hills,
Burning and glowing with all and more than all the
 colours of bright flame,
Ye beautiful slumberers, ravished by the sun's last
 rays,
Ye transfigured victims of his passionate embraces,
Ye, who, dying, encumber the serene air,
Strewn wreckage of love on the surface of the un-
 impassioned blue—
If in me, who behold only the reflected glory,
Your loveliness wrenches at the strings of my being,
How should I behold *his* glory, *his* loveliness,
How endure his love?

Ye splendid clouds, ye who stretch over the hills,
Who burn and glow and are ravished by the dying
 sun,
Ye are his creatures; he made you that he might
 again unmake you;

INTERFLOW

He made you for this end, to die gloriously in the
calm evening sky,
To be his witness, to testify to his love,
Before the unseeing eyes, the unconsidering mind.
When I saw him by day, I cried out and covered
my eyes,
And was glad when the sombre clouds hid him
from my sight.
Fool that I was! Now comes the thankless dark,
And the sombre clouds are no longer sombre but
beautiful,
Because they have found favour before him.

I am answered. I have read my answer aright.
Look! even now, the colours are fading,
The clouds, a moment ago so splendid,
Once more are sombre, their cold forms are
surrendered to the night.
But as for me, I shall not forget,
I will watch all the night long until the dawn.
When he comes I will greet him with a song,
With eyes and heart all on fire with love.
I will spread my arms wide, I will cast myself on
the ground before him,
I will not avoid him, I will be glad and not ashamed,
And he will raise me up.

MOUNTAIN, FOREST, AND PLAIN

MOUNTAIN, FOREST, AND PLAIN

Among the mountains, in the moving mists,
Old men see strange faces, children dream strange
dreams ;
In the hill-wind, blowing where it lists,
Old men hear wild voices, children hear wild
screams.
When the heavy winter, labouring and slow,
Lifts the pall of rain, and lays the counterpane of
snow,
Dreams and visions, ecstasies and fears
Vanish from the sun and his array of sparkling
spears.

Among the forests, when the day's at end,
Old men sit beside the fire and watch the flicker-
ing flames ;
Those that go musing, where tree and shadow blend,
Hear softly whispered old half-familiar names.
Sleeping in the forest, in an ancient room,
Whose secret casements open out upon the wood-
land gloom,
Children all the night long hear beneath the eaves
Murmurs of an ancient world which haunts the
ancient leaves.

INTERFLOW

Not upon the mountain, neither in the wood,
Comes the clearest vision, freest dream of fear and
pain ;
Free comes the dream to man, clearly understood,
When he labours at his work upon the ripening
plain ;
When in one endeavour bended back and brow
Bring all his labour to fulfilment here and now,
God speaks him clearest, and the voice he hears
Likest is to man's voice heard across the flooding
years.

God walks in the fields and on the low foot-hills.
Knee-deep in the corn He walks and knee-deep in
the brook ;
His hand it is that turns the great windmills,
His breath passed across the plain, when all the
grass-heads shook.
Old men see Him walking, as the sun goes down,
And a man may gaze upon the light and yet not
frown.
There have I, too, seen Him ; Him my sun-blest
eyes
Saw, the Gardener, in His Garden, at His mysteries.

‘ A BOAT OF SILVER ’

‘ A BOAT OF SILVER ’

A BOAT of silver on a sleeping sea !

It is a wind from Paradise that blows
This silver ship across the sea to me,

A dream-wind—where it lit no ripple rose,
No ripple is risen on the sleeping sea ;

Yet still the boat draws nearer glidingly,

A dream-boat—’tis a dream without a close !

INTERFLOW

'I HEARD A VOICE'

I HEARD a voice that fell from note to note,
Like falling water from ledge to mossgrown ledge.
From the blue sky it fell, from a bird's throat,
Thin ribbon of sweet sound ; and at the edge
Of a deep pool of silence faltered, where the lilies
float.

ON LEAVING OXFORD

ON LEAVING OXFORD

Lo, as I strayed, Time with his noiseless feet
Has tracked me down, and found me idly sleeping.
Lo, now he takes the lead, while I entreat
One hour for making my good-byes and weeping.
But he holds up his hand, and I—I feel
The end, I hear the bells begin their last sad peal.

As one who climbs and turning unaware
Sees at his feet the city of his dreams,
Too late. For he must journey elsewhere,
Who lived unseeing beside her silent streams.
So is it, Oxford, between me and thee :
I saw thee not, whom now for the last time I see.

INTERFLOW

A LAMENT OVER THE CITY OF LONDON

Poor aimless footsteps, all day long
That pass my window, out of sight,
That pause not till the summer night
And start while still the dawn is young.

Whence do you come and whither go,
And on what errands are you bent?
Desire of what extreme event
Drives you thus restless to and fro?

Were there a million secret joys
Imprisoned in these stony lanes,
Then could I understand your pains,
I might interpret this mad noise.

But here joy hath not shown her face
Since from the murky mind of man
His blackened offspring overran
London—that was so fair a place.

Ah! can these be the feet of those
Who lived and loved her long ago,
When sweet and fresh the Thames did flow,
And she bloomed sweetly as the rose?

A LAMENT OVER THE CITY OF LONDON

Is there among your number he
Who sang of London as 'the flower
Of cities all', in her fair hour
'The jasper of jocundity'?

Nay, nay; not so unkind is Fate
(Though Fate be cruel, as I guess).
Him will not she, for shame, unbless;
He knows not of our altered state.

Hangs overhead the heavy pall;
Flows ever the drab human tide;
The uncouth din doth not subside;
The very stones aloud do call.

This is our state. We are thrice-blest
If under favouring winds we see
That still the eternal canopy
Of azure bends from East to West.

But sometimes over slated roof
I mark the slopes of Heaven afire.
Ah! then flames out the old desire
For the dear gods, who stand aloof.

INTERFLOW

‘ O THAT I HAD A COTTAGE ON A HILL ’

O THAT I had a cottage on a hill
With windows op'ning over a blue plain,
Where I might rest my elbows on the sill
And gaze abroad and read and gaze again.

O that I had a homestead ringed with trees,
Where I might seek the sun between green boughs,
And sit and hear all day the hum of bees,
The songs of birds, the sounds of sheep and cows.

O that I had a great house in a park,
Where the sun leads slow shadows o'er long lawns,
With woods where nightingales sing after dark,
Wrapped in red twilights and empurpling dawns.

O that I had a castle on a rock,
Whose rooms the restless murmur of the sea
Never forsakes, so builded as to mock
The waves and winds and their joint enmity.

Mine is nor hillside cottage, nor deep tree-
Embower'd farm, nor spacious country-seat,
Nor castle on a cliff; only, ah me!
A lodging in a noisy London street.

LINES WRITTEN IN RICHMOND PARK

LINES WRITTEN IN RICHMOND PARK

Now from the monster's entrails I have fled,
 Into light out of dark,
With many thousands likewise vomited
 On common and park.

Here do we laugh and talk and wander
 One long afternoon.
Gold of the sun is given us to squander,
 But 'tis spent so soon !

In Sunday splendour man and maid together
 Stroll down each lane.
She wears her properest feather,
 He swings his cane.

Three hours, two hours, only one hour longer !
 Then home we go,
Dusty and hot and tired, but stronger
 Than yet we know.

INTERFLOW

JUNE DAY

THE hills have hidden the clouds, and the birds are
singing,
And the sun is out ; and the earth is sweet after
the rain ;
And it seems as if there were neither grief nor
pain
Abroad in England to-day with the church bells
ringing,
And the flowers of June unfolding, and the green
trees flinging
Garlanded arms to the sky across the lane.

But what are rain and sun to an old blind cripple ?
And what to me who am blind and crippled in
heart ?
He lives in a world of his own, remote and apart ;
Small joy he has from the tiny sound of the
ripple
On the unseen lake, or the lamb at its mother's
nipple,
Or all the flowers that blossom and birds that
dart.

JUNE DAY

And I too live in a world where no sun has lighted
With fires of love and knowledge the mists of
despair,

Where no sweet flowers glow in the radiant air,
And eyes that strain in the dark are no more requited
By a white dawn over distant mountains sighted,
By the feet of the flaming sun on his cloudy stair.

O flowers in the park beneath my window blooming,
O birds whose singing makes the young trees
glorious ;

In you are love and life revealed victorious,
But lo ! beyond you as a veil Death glooming.
Sweet slaves, who no immortal mien assuming
Sing in the face of Death, sing on, incurious !

Like you I might bow down to that dark Power.
This torrent of days might flow like a simple tale.
But the feet of man are unresting, the feet of man
scale

A ladder of perilous steps in a windy tower.
And whoso attains the summit, at his last hour
He looketh far beyond river and hill and dale.

INTERFLOW

MORNING

(AT HIGHGATE)

FROM my bedroom window looking over London
Lying in the night awake I see the stars burning.
Through the summer darkness I mark them slowly
turning,
Paling from the East in quiet self-abandon.
Now strips the Dawn countless roofs of countless
houses,
Simple fare for eyes which are wearied of starlight,
Stealing up and swelling from that first faint and
far light,
Till the great theme bursts, and Earth her Sun
espouses.

Marriest thou, O Sun, thy stainless splendour
Unto the dark, the grime, the sweat-stained
travail?
At thy will marriest? Dost not abhor, nor cavil?
Unto thy Lord what tale of us wilt render
Thou at the day's end, as in angry brightness
Turning thy back on the smoke of our city
Thou goest homewards? Ah! not scorn, but pity
Need we now. We need thee, thou Golden White-
ness!

MORNING

MORNING

(AT GOFF'S OAK)

THE wind that murmured night-long in the elm,
The old tall elm-tree leaning to the eaves,
Is hushed, and the moon has dipped her glowing
helm

Under the hedge ; for a greater wonder cleaves
The billowy clouds and rides the paling sky.
Night dies, day lives, away all night thoughts fly.

Light and bright with the sun is the room where I
sleep.

Light is my heart as I dress, and half-dressed lean
Over the sill ; and sweet is the air and deep

The scent of the hay new-mown, and fresh and
green

The pasturage under my window, and everything
Silent but that the cattle feed and the birds sing.

INTERFLOW

HOLIDAY SONG

THE fields and woods and little brooks,
The grass, the leaves, the wide clear sky,
The hill-tops where the clouds drift by,
The birds and the rough song of rooks,
The scent of hay, the smell of flowers,
The consciousness of inner powers,
Cleanness of sight and sense and limb,
The spirit's eye not yet grown dim,
The ardent soul hot to pursue
All phantom beauties in its view,
The ardent soul that then adored,
That then in curving visions soared,
Winged by desire, to some high throne,
Where some unfancied splendour shone—
This was a Life to dream upon!

The shining sun in the mountain tarn,
The shining snows on the mountain height,
The shining stars athwart the night,
The shining moon above the tarn
Shine on me now! and through me pierce
The wind that bloweth free and fierce!
I would be as the bitten rocks,
I would be as the grazing flocks,

HOLIDAY SONG

The grazing flocks on the hill-brow
Beneath the everlasting snow.

Too long have I in cities dwelt,
Too long have I bent over books :
I do forget how the great sea looks,
And how the breath of the ocean smelt.
I knew him when I was a boy,
I knew the salt, salt taste of joy,
His stinging kisses in my face—
What mystery is this of place?
Why must I be for ever bound
To this square patch of crowded ground?
I will escape, and go and taste
Once more the breath of that salt waste.

Eastward and Westward to the sea ;
Northward and Southward to the hills ;
Inland, where fruitful Autumn spills
Her store of plenty on her knee—
It matters not which way I go
Nor which way fall these dice I throw,
So I re-capture innocence
And make the past the present tense.

INTERFLOW

‘IT IS OFTEN THAT I HAVE HEARD HER CALLING ’

It is often that I have heard her calling
In the evening of the day.
Often have I seen her shadow falling
Down the westering way,
Down my road to the westward leading,
Down the road by which I climb
Yonder, where the sun lies bleeding
At the end of time.

It is often that I have heard her saying,
‘ Will you not come back to me ? ’
Far have I been straying, long, long delaying ;
But wherever I might be,
Hers are all the bells I hear ringing,
All streams which wander slow ;
All flowers upon earth upspringing
In her heart grow.

It is often that I have answered, sighing,
As a lad sighs deep for home,
‘ How shall one, the many Fates defying,
To the one sure refuge come ?
One is one, and there be many groping
As a blind man toward the door ;
But the most for all their hoping,
See her face no more.’

‘BREAK, BREAK, THOU VASE OF CLAY!’

‘BREAK, BREAK, THOU STUBBORN
VASE OF CLAY!’

BREAK, break, thou stubborn vase of clay!
For I have that within me which must out.
Oh, break, give way!
My soul is pent within thy coarse embrace,
My soul is sick with longing for the day.
Oh, break, give way! thy narrow space
Cannot contain her; and I doubt,
Lest like the moth, who cannot burst her case,
She dies.

Oh, break, give way!
I feel her feebly fluttering. She dies!
She is a beautiful and lovely thing,
Most fair, most piteously frail,
And she is sick with longing for the day.
There is such pity in her eyes,
Such music in her voice, as might avail
To charm our grief away:
And yet, or ever she hath taken wing,
She dies, she dies!

O prison, how canst thou imprison her?
Thou art of Earth and she of God, I ween.

INTERFLOW

How is it that thou art so strong,
And she with all her strength so passing weak ?
Oh, who can say ?
Surely awhile in Heaven she hath been,
And she of Heavenly things would surely speak,
And charm our grief away.
But ah ! she lieth still, she doth not stir.
O prison, thou hast kept her overlong.
She dies !

SIC TRANSIT GLORIA MUNDI

SIC TRANSIT GLORIA MUNDI

BELTED with indistinguishable clouds

Rose a great Mountain ; and about his base

I saw the afterdust of marching crowds ;

I saw the sunlight in his great stone face.

Then journeyed I across the desert plain,

And came, and sat upon a rock, and saw

A pale moonrise, a red sun on the wane,

And heard a distant murmuring of war.

And grew a noise of battle in the land ;

And gathered armies, black against the west,

Whose purple shadows stretched upon the sand

Long shapes of slanting spear and monstrous
crest.

So, while I watched, and while the red sun shone,

And blood and sunlight mingled, their great cry

Troubled the evening stillness, and was gone,

And night poured downwards on them from the
sky.

Then journeyed I across the desert plain

From the great Mountain ; and about his base

I felt a silence in the land again ;

I saw the moonlight on his great stone face.

INTERFLOW

USQUE QUO, DOMINE ?

In the grey morning light,
Before the yellow sun
Had set the waiting pines alight,
My work was begun.

In the white midday glare,
When the brazen heat
Fiercely smote and would not spare,
Hard was the way for my feet.

When the golden afternoon
Bathed in warm radiance
The man and his work, I thought, 'Soon
Cometh deliverance.'

As the sun sinking into the west
Illumined his couch
With splendours, I groaned for my rest,
'I have worked overmuch.'

Nevertheless, till the stars
Blazoned God in the sky,
The grand 'scutcheon no man's hand mars,
I put not my labour by.

USQUE QUO, DOMINE?

All was dark and dimly clear,
And the air was blowing sweet,
When the summons came to my ear
And my work was complete.

INTERFLOW

IN A BAR OF MUSIC

A FLASH of gold
Beneath the dark weight of leaves,
Where the sun weaves
A pattern as new as old ;
A bird's trill,
Heard in the garden at noon
And stilled as soon
By the silence it sought to fill.

A smile, a look
Making one the loved and the lover,
Could he recover
Only the shape that it took ;
A smile, a caress
Of her hand, a kiss found on her mouth,
Like dew to the drouth
Of lips in the wilderness.

A brief light,
Fancied or seen on the sea,
Breaking free
From the restraint of night ;

IN A BAR OF MUSIC

A truant mood,
A flight of the nun from her cell,
From the convent bell,
From the stool, and the gloomy rood.

Something sad,
Withal not asking tears,
Growing through the years,
Waking when the heart is glad ;
Something grand,
Which confounds and makes foolish the wise,
Whoever denies
He cannot understand.

Seeing I capture
Glories which blinded thought ;
My ears have caught
Echoes of senseless rapture.
Listen ! I praise
God with the God in me.
How may this be ?
Mind answers not, but obeys.

INTERFLOW

QUIA IMPOSSIBLE

ALWAYS my life seems strange to me,
This 'I' at myself wondering,
This unaccountable 'to be',
This old incarnate mystery,—
So wonderful a thing.

Yet not more strange to me than death;
Death tells this so fantastic tale,
That with the passing of my breath
The flower of my life withereth,
And all my senses fail.

But strangest is that dream, which says
That death is no true death at all,
A prelude unto glorious days,
When life shall flow a million ways,
Each way be magical.

THE THREE DREAMS

THE THREE DREAMS

‘For God speaketh once, yea twice, yet man perceiveth it not. In a dream, in a vision of the night, when deep sleep falleth upon men in slumberings upon the bed.’

Job xxxiv. 14.

I DREAMED one night
Of long departed days.
I dreamed of lost delight,
Lost gods, lost praise.
And when I did awake
Earth was more beautiful for my dream’s sake.

All day the sun
Embroidered the green earth
With gold, and having run
His course with mirth
He turned his face away,
And night came graciously to crown the day.

Then to my bed
Most joyously I went,
And kneeling down I said,
‘God, Who hast sent
Sweet visions unto me,
Grant that this night they may still sweeter be.’

INTERFLOW

There came a change
 Into my dreams that night.
Dreadful they were, and strange ;
 And a bitter blight
Fell on my heart's glad field
And withered in one night its sun-blessed yield.

All day I kept
 Their legacy of pain.
All day the grey skies wept
 Mists of grey rain.
Night fell, and dumb grief still
Shrouded my heart as grey clouds shroud a hill.

But pitying
 God sent me a third dream,
Whereby Death lost its sting,
 Earth her false gleam.
And the old truth stood plain :
The heart which hath not ached, it beats in vain.

LAMENTABILE

LAMENTABILE

By the long road the tall grass waves and sighs ;
Over the plain one wheeling seagull cries.
How can love grow or any passion rise
On this bare earth and under these grey skies ?

When the dawn broke, no fires flamed in the East,
No trumpets blared, no great rich-coloured feast
Of cloud and sunlight spread ; but darkness ceased
And slowly the wan light of day increased.

Hour of sunset ! Hour of mockery !
Instead of splendours in the sky and sea,
Nothing but this dim drear monotony
Deepening beneath, around, and over me.

Once I believed that some day I should come
To a new country, and there make my home
Among great hills, which some have seen, but some
Have fallen by the wayside stark and dumb.

Alas, alas ! hope's last flower droops and dies.
Life drones on feebly through dead memories.
Yet clings my mind to this one weak surmise
—Somewhere God waits me with His great surprise.

INTERFLOW

REMONSTRANCE

AH, have done with waiting !
Ah, sleep not longer !
See ! through thy barred grating
The light groweth stronger.
Lo, of thy tale of years
A third already
Fallen beneath the shears
Fate holdeth so steady.

Who lieth still asleep
When the sun's new beaming ?
When he clambereth out of the deep
Is it time for dreaming ?
Are there no tasks that call
Out for thy labour ?
Carest thou not at all
For the pains of thy neighbour ?

God help thee, slumberer,
At thy near reckoning !
Surely thou wert happier
To have obeyed His beckoning.
Bethink thee, slumberer ;
On him who dreameth
The end cometh speedier
Than e'er he deemeth.

REMONSTRANCE

How will it be, if Death
Find thee still unheeding?
What answer delivereth
Such an one to thy pleading?
Simply to thy 'Sleep was sweet',
Silent of praise or blame,
He draweth back the sheet,
Strippeth bare the shame.

INTERFLOW

THERE IS A ROAD RUNS THROUGH THE LANDS OF SLEEP

THERE is a road runs through the lands of sleep,
Endless and full of mystery ; 'tis white
With dust of ages, and thereon each night
Alone I travel. Either side rise steep
And towering cliffs, where hands of giants heap
Boulder on boulder. Feeble is the light
Of stars above my head. Grim shapes affright,
And nameless terrors lurking in the deep
Black caverns by the way. Each night I see
Footprints behind me, the long tracks of years,
The untrod dust before : and oft would flee
Yielding my path to those invading fears,
But that I cannot turn, nor do I know
More whence I came than whither I must go.

WISDOM DRAWN FROM LADEN YEARS

WISE WITH THE WISDOM DRAWN FROM LADEN YEARS

Wise with the wisdom drawn from laden years
Are you, my Mother ; foolish still am I,
Like the poor fledgling that in act to fly
Falls to the ground and steals some baby's tears.
And still my childish soul is ruled by fears,
Not yet dispersed by cool self-mastery ;
Still do vague longings flicker dumbly by,
Still broods distrust and slinks from fancied sneers.

Wise though you are, you have not guessed at this !
You think I stand alone, self-confident,
Doubtful in nothing, a rock in shifting seas.
You do not guess that with each casual breeze
My spirit flutters to the firmament,
Swoons on the bitter brink of the abyss.

INTERFLOW

WHAT GIFT HAST THOU, O WORLD WHERE NO STARS GLOW

WHAT gift hast thou, O world where no stars glow,
For me, who still put forth blind hands in vain,
For me, whose love goes and comes not again,
For me, who have fulfilled no tortur'd vow,
Who being bound to this eternal Now,
Grove back and forward, striving to regain
Pure Past or Future purified of pain,
And find no light or sign to show me how ?

‘ I have three gifts for thee—death, pain, and fear.
In fear and pain thou shalt walk all thy days,
And at the end thereof bow down to death.
These be as tokens. Who delivereth
All three at Heaven's door, to him ablaze
With love and life and joy God shall appear.’

‘QU’AS-TU FAIT?’

‘QU’AS-TU FAIT?’

ALAS! with my own hands I have undone
Childhood’s long treasured, slowly woven dream.

Myself I have defiled the holy stream
And poisoned all its fountains, one by one.

Alas, alas! What penance can atone,
What penance can bring back th’ departed
gleam?

The fire is out; even though the ashes seem
Aglow, it is but seeming. Love is gone.

And yet—still beauty lives in sound and sight.

Still do great suns burn red in opal skies,
And thrust through forests shafts of splendid light.

Nay, even in man-made prisons Beauty lies,
Adored in captivity. Vain plight!

She gives her body, but her soul denies.

INTERFLOW

PAGAN PRAYER

Now, of all those who walked upon Greek soil,
Hear me, some god or goddess, and be kind !
Teach my tired limbs and spirit how to find
Contentment even in the midst of toil.
As naked youngsters, glistening with warm oil,
Wrestled beneath the sun, so shall my mind,
Stripped of dark humours and with Truth en-
twined,
Stand up to struggle. Else white arms will coil
About me and about me and allure ;
And I shall soon forget, that once I strode
Forward with the best, and deem hired kisses sweet.
O spirit that can such sicknesses endure !
'Tis ill for thee to halt beside the road,
'Tis ill for thee to sleep in the noonday heat.

MISGIVING

MISGIVING

WHAT profit I, though my lips form
Words that no child can understand?
What profit, though deft phrases swarm
Down the quick pen held in my hand?
What honour from the few deserves
This cold brain and its staff of nerves?

What gain indeed! if that pure sense
Has perished from the growing soul,
Wherewith it felt God's immanence
Throughout the huge unmastered whole,
If, grown proficient in the act,
It lacks what then it had not lacked.

INTERFLOW

A PENNY WHISTLE

I HEARD in the village to-day
A penny whistle piping,
Piping not sweet but clear.
And another tune I seemed to hear,
A tune boy-friends were piping,
Long ago, far away.

Little things, O little things!
Nought of value owning,
Simple, naked, plain.
Time, who else comes not again,
One of you, nought owning,
Back obedient brings.

AMANS AMARE

AMANS AMARE

THERE was a time, when I was glad
Of sun and sky, and bursting meadow.
And these are still ; yet I am sad,
For 'tis the bright day throws the shadow.

THERE was a time, when I received
The wind's warm kisses, well contented,
And not the briefest while believed
That I and Love might be prevented.

SURELY there is a secret spring,
A spring of evil in my being,
Which taints each once-blest earthly thing,
And taints the once-blest pow'r of seeing.

OR wherefore can I no more love,
I wretched, who for Love am longing ?
I set him all gods else above ;
Him have I wronged not, all else wronging.

OH, bitter tale I have to tell !
I seek for Love and have not found him.
And yet I know his face full well
And all the beauties that surround him.

INTERFLOW

I am most like in state to those
Whom God drove from the fabled garden.
For me the thorn upon the rose
Pricks and the tender pathways harden,

Who carry always in my heart
Some sweet of memory madly stinging,
The echo of a once-learned part
For ever in my ears ringing.

O Love ! I know thou art a boy,
And winged, and bearest bow and quiver.
But blind thou art not ! Grief and joy
Are thine to give, the only giver.

Thou art not blind ! Else would it chance,
That joy and grief fell out together,
And lovers' eyes would glow and glance
With the swift change of April weather.

Nay, nay ! thou hast thy chosen slaves,
Thy favourite, whom thou dost dower
With the fair sight of thee, who laves
His body in thee, like a flower—

A daffodil, where daffodils
Crowd by the little steep-banked stream,
And the spring sun serenely fills
Each cup of quick gold to the brim,

In some enchanted month, when days
Drop slow and sweet as falling honey,
And not a frown in heav'n betrays
That life is ever else than sunny.

AMANS AMARE

Fair as a flower is he of face,
Light as a leaf by loose airs driven.
His being is all lit with grace,
And all his grace of thee is given.

Such is thy favourite. He knows
Thee lying down, and thee up-rising,
And where thou goest with thee goes,
Nor seeks, as I seek, agonising

In lonely woods and lonely plains,
And wind-swept tracks on lonely mountains,
And gardens, where are tangled lanes
And broken Herms and weed-choked fountains,

And green-topped pools, whose marble lips
Are cracked with age; and here a column
Stands ruinous, there a lizard slips
Beneath the fallen stones, and solemn

With the great burden of the past
He bears upon his weary shoulders
Time rests, unearthly still, at last,
Where all of man's contriving moulders.

Not such the ways which thou dost haunt,
Who not alone in lonely places
Wandering upliftest thy romaunt,
But girt with worshippers and graces,

With whose full voices thy sweet voice
Mingles, thyself not least delighting
And those, who in thy train rejoice,
The slave-guests of thy own inviting.

INTERFLOW

—Peace, peace, thou too unquiet heart !
If haply through the trees thou hearest
Faint and far-off the tones which part
Each from the friend he has thought dearest ;

If haply, in some sudden glade,
Thou seest, one immortal moment,
The glory which can never fade,
The beauty which is ceaseless torment ;

Shut, shut thy eyes, and stop thy ears,
And run as swiftly as a prayer.
What else will Love bring thee but tears,
Tears and burnings and despair ?

Halting in an accustomed place,
Say this : ‘ I have escaped disaster.
My fathers were a stubborn race ;
Like them I will be my own master.

‘ I was not born to be a slave,
To sell my manhood for caresses,
Though sweet as any Eros gave
To Psyche after her distresses.

‘ Why should I be a slave to Love,
When manlier joys and sterner beauties
Are his, who leaves this charmed grove
And treads the world of common duties ? ’

Ah ! if thou canst, say this, and then
Bid Love good-bye, good-bye to pleasure,
And pass into the world of men,
And shape thy life to its hard measure.

AMANS AMARE

There, all thy strength and wisdom tasked,
There, at thy work among thy fellows,
It may be Love will come unasked,
As poppies, when the harvest yellows.

INTERFLOW

‘WHEN I WAS A BOY’

WHEN I was a boy, I went fishing all the day
Where a brown stream trickled through the peat.
Few and very small were the trout that came my
way,
But that mattered not to me,
For I caught them joyfully,
Singing, Little fishes are the best to eat !

When I was a boy, I made a-many rhymes,
And I wrote them down every one,
And I sung them over a-many many times,
And I sung my joyfulest,
For home-made songs are best,
Singing, O the life before me, scarce begun !

Then, then it was, I dreamed through many an hour,
Through the long, long hours of the day.
But the boy is as the leaf, and the man is as the
flower,
And the dreams of little boys,
They may make a mighty noise
In a world where the grown men play.

THE GARDEN AND THE LAND

THE GARDEN AND THE LAND

I SAW a Garden. It was both wide and fair.
It was so fair, that sick men might be healed
With looking on it all one tranquil day.
It was so wide, that one might wander there
From the sunrise to the sunset without stay.
But it was closed to me ; its doors were sealed.

I saw a Land. It was the home of Beauty.
Therein did every Art a pinnacle touch,
And on each pinnacle set a poised Endeavour ;
Therein was Life an Art, no more a Duty ;
And that bright spirit in man no more did crouch
Shame-faced, but leaped and sparkled on for ever.

Me from that Land, but looking back and longing,
Led the stern angel, Destiny. It faded ;
It grew as dim as any long-told story.
Garden and Land are memories now, belonging
To old times but still tinct with the old glory.
Memories are sweet, though heart and soul be jaded.

INTERFLOW

LINES WRITTEN TO MUSIC

(MENDELSSOHN'S 'LIEDER OHNE WORTE,' No. 22)

Love, thou that bruiseest, nor healest,
Thou that ashamedly into me stealest,
Thou that turnest my heart into flame,
Go back, go back, O Love, by the way that thou
camest!

Nay, go! thou art cruel and wilt not spare.
Love, thy way is hard for me to share.
Nay, go! thou that makest my life a pain.
Turn again
And hearken to my prayer!

Love, that both healest and bruiseest,
Thou that askest not ever but choosest,
Thou that turnest men's hearts into flame,
Hast ever, O Love, gone back by the way that thou
camest?
Ah, closed now is the way that thou camest!

‘ MODERNITY ’

‘ MODERNITY ’

As a train that thunders by,
Where one still watcher leans upon a gate,
At that quiet hour when late
The stars long-hidden gather in the sky ;
Past him the monster flees,
The long smoke backward streams, lit windows race,
A moment's tumult fills the little space
And passes like a breeze
Hushed in the moment when it stirred the trees.

So passes and is gone
The life of man, and hushed its myriad noise.
How loudly he enjoys
His furious day ;—how soon his day is done !
His only law is speed.
Let the whole world gyrating like a top
Spin fast, spin faster to the inconceivable stop !
This is the latest creed.
Art judged thereby is vanity indeed.

Yet haply there are those who without frown
Or smile, look down on us, look calmly down !

INTERFLOW

STARS IN MUD

- ‘WHAT is this that burns and blesses,
Leaping upwards like a fire,
In whose flame my heart confesses
Nameless, limitless desire?’
- ‘Ah! you ask what priests and singers,
Poets and philosophers,
Riddle-makers, riddle-bringers,
Pallid riddle-answerers
- ‘Ask and have asked through the ages
And will ask for ages yet,
Till to dust their dusty pages
Crumble all, and men forget.’
- ‘All her bands from off her throwing,
Bursting all her prison bars,
See! my soul in stature growing
Reaches up beyond the stars.’
- ‘Even so have others spoken;
Even beggars dream of nights.
Learn to read this ancient token:
In beds of straw lurk false delights!’

STARS IN MUD

- ‘Cynic! stay you here and grovel,
Knees in mud and back to heaven.
Seek your friends within your hovel.
I seek *mine*—the shining Seven!
- ‘To the unsunned soundless spaces
Ever outwards, ever higher,
Yoked in Love’s ethereal traces,
Beauty-driven, I aspire.’
- ‘Back so soon, my little traveller?
Journeys now are quickly done.
What news bring you, the unraveller
Of riddles, from beyond the Sun?’
- ‘Mock me, you who gave me warning,
With your old “I told you so.”
Ah, that life so bright at dawning
Soon should lose its early glow!
- ‘Ah, that I who loathed the mire,
Loved the sky, yearned to the star,
Ever outwards, ever higher
Straining, where God’s splendours are,—
- ‘Ah, that I, from what tall eyrie
Into what deep despond hurled,
Now am one amongst the miry
Wingless star-despising world!’
- ‘Little brother, look you yonder.
See! the year’s first flowers in bud.
Does your heaven own a wonder
Such as these are—stars in mud!’

INTERFLOW

BUILDING AND SINGING

MAN toils and raises pillars to the sky ;
His work defies the rude winds rushing by,
And rain and storm scarce mar its symmetry.

But still the careless-seeming feet of Time
Wear down the steps, where priests and kings did
climb ;
And many a fane stands on naught else than rhyme.

Hither and thither blown throughout all lands
Goeth the word, while man still understands ;
Though fallen is the proud work of his hands.

So mighty is the spirit in us ; we speak,
And lo, the sound lives ever without a break !
But build we ne'er so bravely, we are weak.

Therefore lift up thy voice, O man, and sing,
And of all artists let him be crowned king,
Whose songs go down the ages echoing.

A FABLE

A FABLE

THE Devil blew three bubbles with his breath.
The first was colourless ; its name was Death.
The Devil watched it upwards with a grin,
And blew the second, saying, ' Thou art Sin.
In thee let every colour melt and fuse,
Now wane, now glow again with changing hues.'
And as it chased the bubble Death above,
He blew the third and loveliest, which was Love.

Far off three boys were playing with delight,
When the three bubbles sailed into their sight.
First of the three came Love, which shone so fair
And weighed so lightly on the tender air,
That they were smitten through with eagerness
To fondle it by many a soft caress,
And with flushed cheeks and eager, burning eyes
They ran to clasp and kiss their fragile prize.
Alas ! at their first touch the bubble broke,
And vanished in a puff of noisome smoke.

Then did they weep, bewailing bitterly
The loss of that, which was so fair to see,
Till one leaped up and pointed, with a cry,
Where Sin came floating innocently by ;

INTERFLOW

Not lovely as the first, but glistening
With many colours, like an evil thing.
And once again with rapt untutored gaze
They watched its buoyant flight in wide amaze,
Followed, and grasped ; again the bubble burst,
Its light departed, all its hues dispersed.
And, while they mourned, pale Death came, drifting
low,
And brushed against them, like a flake of snow.
And at its chill touch, each in sudden dread
Shuddered a moment, and then lay still—dead.

.

Last came the Devil, something out of breath,
And with a toothpick pricked the bubble Death.

AN EPITAPH

AN EPITAPH

A TRUCE ! Let cry a truce ! These are the dead,
Our dead, whom we with all due reverence
Must gather in one grave, in one wide bed
Of common earth—each one a hero, hence
No need to set that man apart from this.
Of all our dead let the same tale be told !
They were our brothers, and not one shall miss
Honour and love and praiseful words of gold.

INTERFLOW

THE EVE OF WAR

(Written at Highgate on the day before the declaration of war by Germany against Russia and France.)

THE night falls over London. City and sky
Blend slowly. All the crowded plain grows dark.
The last few loiterers leave the glooming park
To swell that mighty tide which still sweeps by,
Heedless save of its own humanity,
Down to the Circus, where the staring arc
Winks through the night, and every face shows
stark
And every cheek betrays its painted lie.

But here through bending trees blows a great wind ;
Through torn cloud-gaps the angry stars look
down.
Here have I heard this night the wings of War,
His dark and frowning countenance I saw.
What dreadful menace hangs above our town ?
Let all the great cities pray ; for they have sinned.

ON THE BEGINNING OF THE WAR

ON THE BEGINNING OF THE WAR

BEHOLD now the responsible hand of Fate !

We, like a troupe of puppets, but go through
Our antics at her bidding. Yet, what we do,
We think from our own will must emanate.
Mistress of our small stage she deals distress
To whom she will, apportions betterment,
And smiles to hear us praise each man's intent,
As if we were sole authors of our success.

Deluded fools ! and I the most deluded,
Seeing the future yawn before my feet,
Myself of all my hopes and plans denuded,
That but thin air which seemed my steady seat,
Still hoping, planning, still in myself confiding,
Though Earth's at war and my good luck in
hiding.

INTERFLOW

ON THE WAR

I.

‘THE mastery of Europe’—it is an age
Since last that cry was heard, that vision burned
A nation’s heart out. Neither have we learned,
Nor our grandparents, what it is to wage
War over land and sea, to lift the page
Ever through five score years of peace unturned,
Where each year Commerce wrote what sums she
had earned—
Totalled at last! And now what deeds of rage
To be set down, and blind and brutish pride,
And who knows what of blood, of tears beside,
Not of our seeking! For, God be thanked, we still
With the old cause of Freedom are allied,
And our old enemy we are pledged to kill—
Cæsar, who would bend Europe to his will.

ON THE WAR

ON THE WAR

II.

Not now the collision of waters, not the shock
Of countering winds, impact of world on world !
What image could body forth whole peoples
hurled

Together, what comparison unlock
Minds to admit such horror ? If God can mock,
Us now He mocks, by these grim clouds unfurled,
Those homes, where late the peaceful smoke up-
curled,

On whose shut doors the envious cannon knock ;
Us dreamers of a Day beyond our day,
Us citizens of a City still to be,
Not yet, but oh ! if to maturity
Even now growing, splendid, in the womb
Of this dark present, if War within his tomb
Be stopt for ever, if England win ! we pray.

INTERFLOW

‘FOR THOSE AT SEA’

(H.M.S. ‘ABOUKIR’, ‘CRESSY’, ‘HOGUE’,
22ND SEPTEMBER)

Now all our English woodland sighs ‘October.’
The mild sun going down behind the trees
Doth bless a countryside as sweet and sober
As ever put on brown and red to please;
The brooks run blood, but ’tis such blood as Heav’n,
Piercèd with light, lets fall on field and village;
England’s dear breasts are still unbruised, unriv’n
The autumn peace on pastureland and tillage.
Dear mother of us all, hast thou not heard?
Thou knowest how thy sons, our brothers, died
Of late, and hast thou not a sorrowful word?
O no! Thou dost contain thyself in pride.
Pity suits not for those, who guarding thee
Guard more than their own lives, for those at sea.

ST. PAUL'S IN WAR TIME

ST. PAUL'S IN WAR TIME

THE last low chord of voices dies away
Up the echoing dome. The priest intones the
prayer
Murmurously interceding. The hushèd air
Darkens about the people as they pray
For peace, and they have peace. But still the day
Tarries outside. Still through the uneasy
square
The crowd rolls and the traffic thunders. And
there
London gives Peace the old contemptuous Nay.

Here, at this same hour, many times before
Standing without I have heard the Heavens
within—
A moment, then the sudden-swinging door
Silenced the one sound, and the City's din
Rushed up. But never against that tyrannous roar
Sounded the tones of Peace so far and thin.

INTERFLOW

QUID SIT FUTURUM

WHEN I look back upon the stream of life,
Which, broadening now to a wide-spacèd river,
Leaves the still lands (O little pools a-quiver
With pigmy winds! O gentle woodlands rife
With song!) and hears the cataracts of strife
Thundering, not far—I ask of Thee, the Giver
Of endings as of beginnings, Who dost shiver
All of Thy chiselling with the unsparèd knife :

Look Thou upon these waters. They have known
Thee all too little in Thy wrath and power.
Look Thou upon them; that, when they are blown
To vapour, when the unavoided hour
Comes, they repent not but leap volleying down,
Careless of the void, in one wide scattering
shower.

TO BELGIUM

TO BELGIUM

You have taken up the burden, which on the back
Of Athens rested in the far-off time,
When first of Greece, and in her own sublime
First hour of greatness, she withstood the attack
Of Persia ; when on her alone the black
Barbarian storm-sky lowered ; when by the rime
Of the salt sea, at Marathon, that worst crime
Was foiled, that dark cloud parted into rack.

You took up Athens' burden ; and Athens lent
Willing her spirit ; and still like Athens, you
Removed your kingdom through the wintry sea.
England this bitter while is proud to be
Your Salamis. For, great as glory grew
To Athens, yours will grow past wonderment.

INTERFLOW

ON THE SINKING OF THE 'FALABA'

28TH MARCH 1915

Now, by just Heaven, this will we not forget.

There have been those who counselled us: 'Be kind.

Humble your enemy not, lest the sun set

In anger on a world smit mad and blind.'

I heard and listened. I answered, it was well

And wisely spoken. So might Hate be o'erthrown.

So out of those black deeds, which made a hell

In India, vengeance forborne, leal love is grown.

Nay, it was just then to be merciful.

But you—'Guardians of the Flame' 'Leaders of the Race'

(Whatever empty names of honour wears

Your arrogance)—you world-wreckers, hot to pull

Honour and charity down from their highest place,

May *this* be paid for in your long sweat and tears.

A CALL TO ARMS

A CALL TO ARMS

DRAW your swords, you silent ones,
 You spectators !
Take your places, you abstracted ones,
 You wise praters !

Put your books by, you students,
 You learners !
Lay down your pens, you writers,
 You light-burners !

Those quiet days you loved are over,
 Can be no longer ;
Those still thoughtful nights, those too
 Must be no longer.

Other tasks now ! Other labours !
 Be there no flinching,
No turning aside, no deserting,
 No thirst-quenching !

The Future ? Not for us ; for others.
 Ours is the present ;
Ours too the Past—that is still
 Splendidly present.

INTERFLOW

Let the Future go ! Since the past is
Not yet ended,
Be it yours then to re-carve it
Even more splendid.

Draw your swords, take your places,
Students, teachers !
Lay down your pens, put your books by,
Writers, researchers !

RUPERT BROOKE

RUPERT BROOKE

APRIL 23, 1915

STILLED is one voice, amongst the many voices,
Silent one heart, of all young hearts high beating.
No more, no more at Grantchester rejoices
His river-friend, but footsteps faint retreating
Away, away into unsounding distance
Aching regrets. We too regret him aching,
Voice of bright steel and gold, radiant resistance
To Death-in-Life! Alas, him true Death taking,
Newly unsheathed, our newest eagerest blade,
New-tempered in war's hottest furnace-flame,
Breaks—breaks! How could we spare him to be
broken,
Happy son, whom to be England's servant made
Happier? How Glory might have winged his
name
With now unspoken words, words ever unspoken!

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